

BUILDING A NEW HOME



Fairfax County
VIRGINIA

Land Development Services

Department of Public Works and Environmental Services

Hours of Operation: Monday - Thursday: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Friday: 9:15 to 4:00 p.m.

Location: **Herrity Building**
12055 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035-5504
Telephone: 703-222-0801
TTY: 703-324-1877



Visit us on the web at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes

This publication provides guidelines for building a detached single family home. The requirements herein are the most common and are not representative of all the conditions you may encounter when designing and constructing a new home. There are three companion publications which contain additional information for building a new home. *Grading Plans* outlines the grading plan and site construction approval process. *Energy Calculations* provides instructions and forms to assist in the design of the energy conservation elements of your new home. *New Home Inspections* provides a checklist on what inspections are required and when.

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PERMITS REQUIRED

You must obtain permits for the construction of a new home. Listed below are the types of permits required, depending on the complexity of the project. Except as noted below, apply for your permits at the **Permit Application Center** located at the Herrity Building, 2nd floor, telephone: **703-222-0801, TTY 703-324-1877**.

- **Building permit** for architectural and structural elements.
- **Electrical permit** for all electrical installations.
- **Mechanical permit** for installations of heating and air conditioning systems.
- **Plumbing permit** for installations of plumbing and gas piping systems.
- **Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) permit** (and bond) when your property is located on a state road. Apply at the **VDOT Permit Office** 14628 Avion Parkway, Suite 120, Chantilly, telephone: **703-383-2888, TTY 711**.
- **Well/septic permit** for altering or relocating private water or sewage systems. Apply at the **Health Department** 10777 Main Street, Fairfax, telephone: **703-246-2201, TTY 711**.

HELPFUL HINT: You may obtain permits in your own name; however, if a contractor is to perform the work, it is strongly recommended that the contractor secure the permit and be listed as the responsible party. In this way, the County will be in a better position to assist you in gaining compliance with codes if the work is defective. A contractor must be properly licensed in order to obtain a permit.

BEFORE OBTAINING A PERMIT

COVENANTS AND DEED RESTRICTIONS

Covenants and Deed Restrictions are regulations set forth by many homeowner or civic associations. While not enforced by Fairfax County, some regulations may restrict construction. For more information, contact your association or the Land Records office in the Jennings Building (Judicial Center), 3rd Floor, 4110 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, telephone: **703-691-7320, TTY 711**.

BUILDING CODES

The *Code of Virginia* requires that your new home comply with the *2000 Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC)* which incorporates the following model codes for residential construction:

- *2000 International Residential Code*
- *2000 International Energy Conservation Code*

You may purchase these codes at the Publications Center located in Suite 156 of the Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, telephone: **703-324-2974, TTY 711**, or online at www.iccsafe.org. The codes are also available in the reference section of the Fairfax County regional libraries.

MINIMUM SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All submissions for a new home must include the following:

- ☐ Three sets of building plans (see below for requirements).
- ☐ Three copies of the energy calculations (see page 3 for requirements).
- ☐ One approved copy of the grading plan (for more information, please refer to the *Grading Plans* publication).

BUILDING PLANS

Building Plans must meet the following requirements:

- ☐ The Fairfax County *Townhouse and Single Family Dwelling Cover Sheet* must be attached to each set of building plans. The cover sheet is available online and at the Permit Application Center.
- ☐ Minimum scale of 1/8 inch = 1 foot; all dimensions must be shown.
- ☐ Minimum sheet size: 11" x 17", no pencil.
- ☐ Code year used for the design (see above).
- ☐ Name, address, and occupation of the building designer.
- ☐ If plans are prepared by a Virginia registered design professional, at least one set of plans must bear the **original** seal, signature, and date. This set will be retained by the County.
- ☐ List of material specifications including, but not limited to: grade and species of lumber, concrete strength, and steel strength.
- ☐ List of design load criteria: live load, dead load, snow load, wind load, bearing capacity, and lateral earth pressure (for Fairfax County: ground snow load = 25 PSF and wind speed = 90 mph).
- ☐ Foundation plan.
- ☐ Footing details (minimum footing depth is 24").
- ☐ Floor plans of all levels with all rooms labeled.
- ☐ Location of smoke detectors.
- ☐ Structural framing plans for each level accurately detailing all members, sizes, span lengths, and spacing.
- ☐ Structural details of connections.

- ☐ Evaluation report from the International Code Council (ICC) Evaluation Service and load calculations for all adjustable columns.
- ☐ Typical wall section with sheathing thickness and type (special products or devices require an ICC Evaluation Report).
- ☐ Building cross sections with all posts, joists, and beams labeled.
- ☐ Insulation R-values.
- ☐ Structural framing plan for roof.

HELPFUL HINT: Truss shop drawings for pre-engineered floor or roof trusses may be submitted directly to the Building Plan Review Division after the building permit has been issued, but prior to any truss erection. Attach the *Truss Plan Cover Sheet* to a minimum of two sets of shop drawings; at least one set must have an **original** seal and signature of the truss designer. Approval can be obtained while you wait.

- ☐ Elevations (front, sides, and rear) indicating window and door dimensions.
- ☐ Whirlpool/Jacuzzi/oversized tub manufacturer's information showing structural loading requirements.
- ☐ Location of safety glazing.
- ☐ Manufacturer's design specifications for pre-fabricated fireplaces.

ENERGY CALCULATIONS

Energy calculations, which ensure a new home complies with energy conservation regulations, must be attached to **each set** of building drawings. A publication with instructions, entitled *Energy Calculations*, is available for more assistance.

GRADING PLAN

A grading plan is a drawing of your construction site showing existing and proposed topography, environmental controls, demolition, and improvements to the land.

For more detailed information, a publication entitled *Grading Plans* is available, or contact the Site Permits Branch, on the 2nd floor of the Herrity Building, telephone: **703-324-1510, TTY 711**.

SOILS

New homes constructed in an unmapped or problem soil require special requirements; see below. For more information, contact the Site Permits Branch on the 2nd floor of the Herrity Building, telephone: **703-324-1510, TTY 711**.

- **Unmapped soils** occur where the soils have not been previously identified on soil maps. If your property falls within one of these unmapped areas, you must hire a soil scientist to identify the soil or you must design the foundation for a worst case soil situation. A publication, entitled *Residential Construction in Unmapped Soils Areas*, is available for more assistance.
- **Problem soils** are soil types which may have a high water table, expansive clays, or other behavioral problems. If your property contains a problem soil, you may need to hire a registered design professional to design the foundation system.

OBTAINING A PERMIT

PERMIT PROCESS

1. The review process begins when the grading plans and/or the building plans are complete and have been submitted, along with a building permit application, to the Permit Application Center on the second floor of the Herrity Building. The permit will be "logged in," and the project will be assigned a permit number and plan tracking number. Once the permit number has been assigned, the grading plans may proceed in the manner described in *Grading Plans*.
 2. The building plans will then be scaled to determine the permit fee. When the permit filing fee is paid, the plans will be forwarded to the Building Plan Review Division as described below. The building permit application will be returned to you for obtaining the approval signatures from the applicable offices required for permit issuance. The signatures are placed on the lines adjacent to their corresponding departments as listed on the building permit application and as noted below.
 - **Zoning** reviews the grading plan to ensure setback requirements, as set forth by the County Zoning Ordinance, are maintained. The Zoning Permit Review Branch is located at the Herrity Building, 2nd floor, telephone: **703-222-1082, TTY 711**.
 - **Site Permits** will review the grading plan for site-related issues, soils, and conformance to the *Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance* and will sign-off on the building permit application after all the applicable site-related fees and deposits have been paid. Site Permits is located at the Herrity Building, 2nd floor, telephone: **703-324-1510, TTY 711**.
 - **Health Department**, located at 10777 Main Street, Fairfax, telephone: **703-246-2444, TTY 711**, will review the grading plan for clearances to existing septic systems and/or wells if they exist on the property.
 - **Building Plan Review Division**, located on the 3rd floor of the Herrity Building, telephone: **703-222-0114, TTY 711**, will review for compliance to the applicable building codes and will sign-off on the building permit application only after obtaining approval from all other agencies.
- HELPFUL HINT:** the grading plan review process and the building plan review process can take place simultaneously; however, final approval by the Building Plan Review Division will be delayed until the approved grading plan is submitted for review with the building plans.
- **Sanitation** will sign-off on the building permit application after payment for all sewer fees has been paid (when applicable). The Wastewater Planning and Monitoring Division is located on the 3rd floor of the Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, telephone: **703-324-5015, TTY 711**.
 3. Once all required signatures have been obtained on the building permit application, you must then bring the approved grading plan, approved building plans and the building permit application to Log Out desk and Cashier's Office on the 2nd floor of the Herrity Building. There, the permit will be processed, and all remaining fees must be paid.

HELPFUL HINT: If a third party inspection agency is to complete the foundation inspections, you must inform the Residential Inspections Division (RID) on the 6th floor of the Herrity Building prior to final payment of the building permit fee. The agency chosen must be approved by RID to perform foundation inspections in the county. **This is a requirement for homes built on problem soils.**

TRADE PERMIT PROCESS

Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing permits are issued after the building permit is approved, but may be processed at the same time. Electrical and plumbing permits do not require a plan submittal; code compliance will be determined at the time of the inspection. The mechanical permit requires a submission of the *Residential Heat Loss and Heat Gain Certification* (sometimes referred to as the "Manual J"). Application of the mechanical permit must be made by the HVAC contractor.

FEES

For information on the related fees for a new home contact the following:

- Permit Application Center for building, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing permits at **703-222-0801, TTY 703-324-1877** or visit **www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes**.
- Plan and Document Control for grading plan and site related fees at **703-324-1730, TTY 711**.
- Health Department for fees related to septic systems and wells at **703-246-2444, TTY 711**.
- VDOT at **703-383-2888, TTY 711**.
- Wastewater Planning and Monitoring Division for sewer fees at **703-324-5015, TTY 711**.
- Fairfax County Water Authority for public water connections at **703-659-5600, TTY 703-698-7025**

AFTER OBTAINING A PERMIT

REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC UTILITIES

You must call "*Miss Utility*," a free service, at **1-800-552-7001, TTY 711** before excavating to ensure that the construction does not interfere with underground utility lines. If you fail to contact Miss Utility and damage occurs, you will be liable for all costs of repair.

INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS

- A copy of the approved permit, grading plan, building plans, and *Residential Heat Loss and Heat Gain Certification* must be on the job site and must be available to the inspector during each inspection.
- A companion handout, entitled *New Home Inspections*, provides a complete list of required residential inspections for new single family dwellings, the appropriate inspection agency, the type of permit to which the inspection applies, and the stage of construction at which the project should be inspected.

SCHEDULING AN INSPECTION

It is the responsibility of the permit holder or the permit holder's representative to notify the County when the stages of construction are reached that require an inspection. Ladders, scaffolds, and testing equipment required to complete an inspection must be provided. Inspection requests may be made using one of the three methods listed below; please have your permit number available when scheduling an inspection. Requests made prior to 11:59 p.m. on automated systems will be scheduled for the next workday.

- Inspection Request Center: **703-222-0455, TTY 711**, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Thursday, and 9:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Fridays.
- Automated Inspection Request System (AIRS): **703-222-2474, TTY 711**, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Building Code Services Online: **www.fairfaxcounty.gov/isisnet**, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Fairfax County is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in all County programs, services and activities and will provide this document in alternative formats and in different languages upon request. Please call 703-324-5033, TTY 711 or write DPWES, Room 659, the Herrity Building, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA 22035-5506. Please allow at least seven working days for preparation of material.